

DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRIC PSYCHOLOGY

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL ORANGE COUNTY

Psychology Training Program: Important Policies and Procedures

Problems that Could Arise:
As practicum students/intern/trainees who are in training, trainees are not expected to be an independently functioning psychologist. However, trainees are expected to: always consider the best interests of patients/ families, be aware of limitations and when more supervision is necessary, be assertive about needs for additional supervision and training, follow the APA Ethics Code, work hard, be conscientious, and follow all CHOC policies and procedures including but not limited to Associate Responsibilities policies such as the Code of Business Conduct, Attendance, Disruptive Behavior, Dress Code, Professional Conduct, Punctuality, and Therapeutic Relationships and Professional Boundaries policies. These policies are reviewed during new hire hospital orientation and available at all times to all CHOC associates through CHOC policy manager.

Minor infractions will typically be brought to your attention by your primary supervisor or the Director of Training at the earliest possible occasion. We always will include in those discussions opportunities for you to provide your perspective and additional evidence/documentation as we consider options to address the concerns. Our first goal is to work with you if there are any concerns. We do want you to be aware, however, of the steps that can be taken if there are repeated problems or if individuals are not willing to work on the problems identified.
Minor infractions typically lead to a verbal warning. If repeated, they may lead to a written notice and may lead to a referral for counseling. Examples of minor infractions are inappropriate dress, uncooperative attitude, and repeated tardiness.

Moderate infractions typically receive a written warning, which is placed in your personnel file. Again, we always will include in those discussions opportunities for you to provide your perspective and additional evidence/documentation as we consider options to address the concerns. Depending on the situation, CHOC reserves the right to take additional disciplinary action, such as temporary absence without pay. Examples of moderate infractions are improper or abusive language, refusal to perform work as instructed, disclosure of confidential information, and unexcused or misrepresented absence.

Serious infractions require disciplinary suspension or discharge. We always will include in those discussions opportunities for you to provide your perspective and additional evidence/documentation as we consider options to address the concerns. Examples of such inappropriate behavior for the workplace are intoxication, jeopardizing the health and safety of a patient, or insubordination.

Major infractions generally lead to discharge, but are limited to extreme behavior such as fighting, theft, immoral conduct, or sexual harassment. We always will include in those discussions opportunities for you to provide your perspective and additional evidence/documentation as we consider options to address the concerns.

DUE PROCESS, APPEALS and GRIEVANCES PROCEDURES

In the course of training, it is possible that problems will occur. These problems can be minor or more major. We believe in trying to resolve all problems informally if at all possible. However, if problems cannot be addressed informally, there are additional steps that can be followed as detailed below. Trainees have the right to a fair and impartial hearing before decisions are finalized. Trainees also have the right to appeal any decision with which they disagree (see Appeals Procedures below).

Due Process for Problem Behaviors

All Due Process procedures will be applied in a non-discriminatory manner, take into account cultural and individual diversity factors, and ensure equitable treatment across all trainees.

The training program strictly prohibits retaliation against trainees who participate in due process proceedings and/or who raise concerns or file grievances.

Step 1: Informal Notice, Hearing, and Appeal

A. Informal Notice:

If problem behaviors (which can include deficiencies in training, an inability or unwillingness to acquire necessary professional skills, an inability to control personal stress or strong emotions which interfere with professional behavior) are identified, the supervisor or Director of Training will provide notice by discussing the problem behavior with the trainee directly. The training program is responsible for providing clear, direct, and timely feedback regarding problem behaviors within competency domains, along with supporting documentation. As a part of this discussion, suggestions to address and resolve the problems will be identified.

B. Informal Notice Hearing:

The trainee will have the opportunity to review the information presented and then to meet with relevant training team members to provide their perspective and additional evidence/documentation as we consider options to address the concerns. The trainee may choose to be accompanied by a faculty member of the trainee's choice as a source of support.

C. Informal Notice Outcome and Appeal:

The training program will outline the steps that the trainee will be responsible for taking to rectify the problem behaviors and timeline, and the steps that the training program will be responsible for to rectify the problem behaviors and timeline. The supervisor or Training Director will also outline when feedback on progress will be given, generally speaking this feedback would occur during regular supervision or meetings with the Director of Training. Trainees will be provided with information on the trainee's right to respond and appeal (please see appeals procedure below).

Step 2: Written Notice, Hearing, and Appeal

A. Written Notice:

If problem behaviors persist and the trainee does not appear to be able to resolve the issues informally, a written notice will be given by the Director of Training. Trainees will receive timely written notice when significant concerns or problematic behaviors persist. The trainee will be aware of this progression through feedback on progress in the Informal Notification step. The written notice is determined by the trainee's training team and training director(s). The written notice will be provided within 2 business days of notice that the progress on the informal plan has not been successful and include descriptions of the problem behaviors, dates the problem behaviors were brought to the trainee's attention and by whom, competency

benchmarks related to the problematic behaviors, steps already taken to address the identified behaviors and steps that the trainee will be responsible for taking to rectify the problem behaviors and timeline, steps that the training program will be responsible for to rectify the problem behaviors and timeline. The timeline may vary based on the type of problem, the steps to address the problem, and what might be a reasonable time to remediate the issue and will all be discussed with the trainee. The written notice will also include the evaluation criteria for successful resolution of the problematic behaviors, the plan for evaluating progress, and a date for re-evaluation of acceptable performance. Trainees will be provided with information on the trainee's right to respond, request a hearing, and appeal. If the problem behavior is addressed in a CHOC Human Resources (HR) policy, the training program will also follow HR policies with regard to corrective and disciplinary actions.

B. Written Notice Hearing:

Trainees have the right to a fair and impartial hearing before a decision is finalized. Trainees have 2 business days to request a hearing following written notice. The hearing will be conducted by a panel of two members of the training team who are not current supervisors of the trainee (i.e., the training director and one additional training team member unless the training director is a supervisor of the trainee and then two members of the training team who are not current supervisors of the trainee), thus serving as impartial decision-makers. The trainee may respond to the concerns presented in written notice by providing their perspective and explanation for problematic behaviors identified and presenting evidence, documents, other supporting information, and witnesses to assist the hearing panel in making decisions as to courses of action for addressing problematic behaviors. The trainee may choose to be accompanied by a faculty member of the trainee's choice as a source of support. The hearing panel will provide a decision in writing that is tied to competency expectations, ethical standards, training goals, and program policies within 3 business days of the hearing. A record of the hearing step will be maintained by the training program.

C. Written Notice Outcome and Appeal:

The training program will remove or revise the written notice plan including steps that the trainee will be responsible for taking to rectify the problem behaviors and timeline, steps that the training program will be responsible for to rectify the problem behaviors and timeline, the evaluation criteria for successful resolution of the problematic behaviors, the plan for evaluating progress, and a date for re-evaluation of acceptable performance based upon the decision from the hearing. The revised written notice plan will be reviewed with the trainee in detail within 2 business days of receiving the results from the written notice hearing. Trainees will be provided with information on the trainee's right to respond and appeal (please see appeals procedure below). If the problem behavior is addressed in a CHOC Human Resources (HR) policy, the training program will also follow HR policies with regard to corrective and disciplinary actions.

Step 3: Competency Remediation, Hearing, and Appeal:

A. Competency Remediation Notice:

If the problem persists upon the agreed upon re-evaluation, the training program will recommend remediation for the problem behaviors, including a competency remediation plan. The trainee will be aware of this progression through feedback on progress in the Written Notice step described above. The competency remediation plan need is determined by the trainee's training team, training director(s), and the trainee. The competency remediation plan will include descriptions of the problem

behaviors, dates the problem behaviors were brought to the trainee's attention and by whom, competency benchmarks related to the problematic behaviors, and ways that these behaviors have been attempted to be addressed by the trainee and by the training program. The competency remediation plan will also include a detailed description of the expectations for acceptable performance for each problem behavior, the trainee's responsibilities and actions, the supervisor's, training team, and training director's responsibilities and actions, the plan for evaluating progress, the timeframe & method for receiving feedback about progress towards the remediation plan goal, the timeframe for acceptable performance, the assessment methods to document acceptable performance, and consequences for unsuccessful remediation.

The proposed competency remediation plan will be reviewed with the trainee in detail within 2 business days of notice to the trainee of moving towards competency remediation plan. The trainee will have the opportunity to ask questions, indicate agreement or disagreement with the plan, and if in disagreement request a competency remediation hearing (please see step B below).

The competency remediation plan will also include a summative evaluation of the competency remediation plan detailing follow-up meeting dates, outcome of the remediation plan (e.g., remediation met, partially met, or not met), next steps (e.g., remediation concluded, remediation continued and plan modified, or next step in Due Process), timeline and format for receiving feedback on progress towards competency remediation and next evaluation date if needed. A copy of the competency remediation plan will be given to the psychology trainee as well as kept by the Director of Training. If a psychology practicum student or intern is placed on competency remediation plan, the Director of Training will also notify the Training Director of their doctoral training program of the reason for the remediation plan and a copy of the written competency remediation plan. If the problem behavior is addressed in a CHOC HR policy, the training program will also follow HR policies with regard to corrective and disciplinary actions.

B. Competency Remediation Hearing:

Trainees have the right to a fair and impartial hearing before a decision is finalized. Trainees have 2 business days to request a hearing following competency remediation. The hearing will be conducted by a panel of two members of the training team who are not current supervisors of the trainee (i.e., the training director and one additional training team member unless the training director is a supervisor of the trainee and then two members of the training team who are not current supervisors of the trainee), thus serving as impartial decision-makers. The trainee may respond to the concerns presented in competency remediation by providing their perspective and explanation for problematic behaviors identified and presenting evidence, documents, other supporting information, and witnesses to assist the hearing panel in making decisions as to courses of action for addressing problematic behaviors. The trainee may choose to be accompanied by a faculty member of the trainee's choice as a source of support. The hearing panel will provide a decision in writing that is tied to competency expectations, ethical standards, training goals, and program policies within 3 business days of the hearing. A record of the hearing step will be maintained by the training program.

C. Competency Remediation Outcome and Appeal:

The training program will remove or revise the competency remediation plan including steps that the trainee will be responsible for taking to rectify the problem behaviors and timeline, steps that the training program will be responsible for to

rectify the problem behaviors and timeline, the evaluation criteria for successful remediation of the problematic behaviors, the plan for evaluating progress, and a date for re-evaluation of acceptable performance based upon the decision from the hearing. The revised competency remediation plan will be reviewed with the trainee in detail within 2 business days of receiving the results from the competency remediation hearing. The trainee will have the opportunity to ask questions, indicate agreement or disagreement with the revised competency remediation plan, and if in disagreement, provide a detailed description of the rationale for the disagreement and alternative suggestions. Trainees will be provided with information on the trainee's right to respond and appeal (please see appeals procedure below). If the problem behavior is addressed in a CHOC Human Resources (HR) policy, the training program will also follow HR policies with regard to corrective and disciplinary actions.

While we expect that all trainees will successfully complete the program, we do have guidelines for placing trainees on probation if problems cannot be resolved utilizing the above process, and for terminating the individual if problems cannot be resolved with a formal probation plan. All trainees would receive feedback about their progress on the remediation plan and have notice about possible probation prior to any movement towards probation. As described above, there are numerous steps and you will be fully informed long before any of the probation or termination processes would be initiated. We also have policies that guide the early resignation from the program if the trainee decides to do so. Finally, as noted above, trainees can appeal any decisions made by the Training Program (see below for the steps).

Step 4: Probation Notice, Hearing, and Appeal

A. Probation Notice:

If, despite the steps above, a trainee does not perform their duties as required, or if the trainee conducts themselves in a manner that is contrary to the interest of the hospital, the Director of Training may place them on probation according to the following procedures:

1. The Director of Training will discuss the matter with the psychology trainee, review the competency remediation plan and expectations, and summative evaluation of the competency remediation plan. The Director of Training will then discuss placing the trainee on probation and revise the competency remediation plan to reflect the probation status. The probation competency remediation plan will include a detailed description of the expectations for acceptable performance for each problem behavior, the trainee's responsibilities and actions, the supervisor's, training team, and training director's responsibilities and actions, the timeframe for acceptable performance, the assessment methods to document acceptable performance, timeline and format for receiving feedback on progress towards competency remediation and consequences for unsuccessful remediation while on probation. The probation competency remediation plan will be reviewed with the trainee in detail and the trainee will have the opportunity to ask questions, indicate agreement or disagreement with the plan, and if in disagreement request a probation hearing (please see step B below).

   A copy of the probation competency remediation plan will be given to the psychology trainee as well as kept by the Director of Training. If a psychology practicum student or intern is placed on competency remediation plan, the Director of Training will also notify the Training Director of their doctoral training program of the reason for the remediation plan and a copy of the written

competency remediation plan. If the problem behavior is addressed in a CHOC HR policy, the training program will also follow HR policies with regard to corrective and disciplinary actions.

2. If the psychology trainee has satisfactorily met the conditions of the probation competency remediation plan, according to written input from supervisors and other relevant hospital staff focused on the evaluation criterion outlined in the plan, the psychology trainee will be removed from probationary status. In the case of a practicum student or intern, the Director of Training will also notify the Training Director of their doctoral training program of the successful remediation.
3. If the psychology trainee does not fulfill the requirements of the probation competency remediation plan, and consequently does not perform their duties as required or conducts themselves in a manner that is contrary to the interests of the hospital, the hospital may terminate the psychology trainee appointment.

B. Probation Hearing:

Trainees have the right to a fair and impartial hearing before a decision is finalized. Trainees have 2 business days to request a hearing following the probation notice. The hearing will be conducted by a panel of two members of the training team who are not current supervisors of the trainee (i.e., the training director and one additional training team member unless the training director is a supervisor of the trainee and then two members of the training team who are not current supervisors of the trainee), thus serving as impartial decision-makers. The trainee may respond to the concerns presented in the probation notice by providing their perspective and explanation for problematic behaviors identified and presenting evidence, documents, other supporting information, and witnesses to assist the hearing panel in making decisions as to courses of action for addressing problematic behaviors. The trainee may choose to be accompanied by a faculty member of the trainee's choice as a source of support. The hearing panel will provide a decision in writing that is tied to competency expectations, ethical standards, training goals, and program policies within 3 business days of the hearing. A record of the hearing step will be maintained by the training program.

C. Probation Outcome and Appeal:

The training program will remove or revise the probation notice including steps that the trainee will be responsible for taking to rectify the problem behaviors and timeline, steps that the training program will be responsible for to rectify the problem behaviors and timeline, the evaluation criteria for successful remediation of the problematic behaviors, the plan for evaluating progress, and a date for re-evaluation of acceptable performance based upon the decision from the hearing. The revised probation notice will be reviewed with the trainee in detail within 2 business days of receiving the results from the probation notice hearing. The trainee will have the opportunity to ask questions, indicate agreement or disagreement with the revised probation plan, and if in disagreement, provide a detailed description of the rationale for the disagreement and alternative suggestions. Trainees will be provided with information on the trainee's right to respond and appeal (please see appeals procedure below). If the problem behavior is addressed in a CHOC Human Resources (HR) policy, the training program will also follow HR policies with regard to corrective and disciplinary actions.

Step 5: Termination Notice, Hearing, and Appeal

A. Termination Notice:

1. If the psychology trainee does not fulfill the requirements of the probation competency remediation plan and consequently does not perform their duties as

required or conducts themselves in a manner that is contrary to the interests of the hospital, the hospital may terminate the psychology trainee appointment per HR policies. All trainees would receive feedback about their progress on the remediation plan and have notice about possible probation prior to any movement towards termination and have an opportunity for the appeals process (see below for the steps).

2. If a practicum student or intern is terminated, a letter will be written by CHOC's Director of Training to the Director of Training of the graduate program outlining the problems, the attempts at resolution, and the reasons for the decision to terminate the trainee.

B. Termination Hearing:

Trainees have the right to a fair and impartial hearing before a decision is finalized. Trainees have 2 business days to request a hearing following the termination notice. The hearing will be conducted by a panel of two members of the training team who are not current supervisors of the trainee (i.e., the training director and one additional training team member unless the training director is a supervisor of the trainee and then two members of the training team who are not current supervisors of the trainee), thus serving as impartial decision-makers. The trainee may respond to the concerns presented in the termination notice by providing their perspective and explanation for problematic behaviors identified and presenting evidence, documents, other supporting information, and witnesses to assist the hearing panel in making decisions as to courses of action for addressing problematic behaviors. The trainee may choose to be accompanied by a faculty member of the trainee's choice as a source of support. The hearing panel will provide a decision in writing that is tied to competency expectations, ethical standards, training goals, and program policies within 3 business days of the hearing. A record of the hearing step will be maintained by the training program.

C. Termination Outcome and Appeal:

The training program will proceed with termination if the decision by the hearing panel is in agreement with termination or will remove or revise the termination notice including placing back on probation and steps that the trainee will be responsible for taking to rectify the problem behaviors and timeline, steps that the training program will be responsible for to rectify the problem behaviors and timeline, the evaluation criteria for successful remediation of the problematic behaviors, the plan for evaluating progress, and a date for re-evaluation of acceptable performance based upon the decision from the hearing. If the result is a revised termination notice that results in placing back on probation, the new probation notice will be reviewed with the trainee in detail within 2 business days of receiving the results from the probation notice hearing. The trainee will have the opportunity to ask questions, indicate agreement or disagreement with the revised probation plan, and if in disagreement, provide a detailed description of the rationale for the disagreement and alternative suggestions. Trainees will be provided with information on the trainee's right to respond and appeal (please see appeals procedure below). If the problem behavior is addressed in a CHOC Human Resources (HR) policy, the training program will also follow HR policies with regard to corrective and disciplinary actions.

Appeals Procedure:

If a Psychology trainee is dissatisfied with any decision(s) regarding the trainee or believes that any decision(s) was/were not appropriate or fairly reached at any point in the Due Process procedure, the trainee has the opportunity to appeal the decision(s). The following procedures will be utilized:

Step 1:

The Psychology trainees will discuss the matter with the training director(s). If the problem is

with a decision made by the training director(s), the trainee may discuss the matter with the Chief Psychologist. If the problem is with a decision made by the Chief Psychologist, the trainee may discuss the issue with the Chief Medical Officer.

Step 2:
If the matter is not satisfactorily settled in Step 1, the psychology trainee may appeal in writing to the Chief Psychologist as well as speak to the Chief Psychologist in person within 10 working days from unsatisfactory resolution with the training director(s). The appeal shall include all pertinent facts and the remedy requested by the trainee. The Chief Psychologist will provide a written letter of decision in the manner within 10 working days of receipt of the letter and speak with the trainee if they wish to have a face-to-face meeting. They may talk to relevant parties to gather additional information.

Step 3:
If the decision of the Chief Psychologist is not acceptable to the trainee, they may appeal in writing to the Chief Medical Officer within 10 working days from receiving the written decision letter from the Chief Psychologist.

Step 4:
The Chief Medical Officer will render a decision within 10 working days which in all events shall be final and binding on all parties.
Each step must be completed within 10 working days.

Grievance Procedure:
While we certainly hope there are no problems with the training program, we recognize those can occur. Individuals in training can use the following procedure to resolve these issues. These would include difficulties or problems other than evaluation related (e.g., poor/inadequate supervision, unavailability of supervisor(s), workload issues, personality clashes, other staff conflicts) during their training program, a trainee can:

Step 1:

Discuss the issue directly with the staff member(s) involved.

Step 2:
If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the trainee should discuss the concern with the training director(s). If the problem is with the training director(s), the trainee may discuss the matter with the Chief Psychologist. If the problem is with the Chief Psychologist, the trainee may discuss the issue with the Chief Medical Officer.

Step 3:
If the matter is not satisfactorily settled in Step 2, the Psychology trainee may appeal in writing to the Chief Psychologist. The appeal shall include all pertinent facts and the remedy requested by the trainee. The Chief Psychologist will provide a written letter of her decision in the manner within 10 working days of receipt of the letter. They may talk to relevant parties to gather additional information.

Step 4:
If the decision of the Chief Psychologist is not acceptable to the trainee, they may appeal in writing to the Chief Medical Officer within 10 working days from receiving the written decision letter from the Chief Psychologist.

Step 5:
The Chief Medical Officer will render a decision within 10 working days which in all events shall

be final and binding on all parties.

Each step must be completed within 10 working days.

Resignation Procedure for Trainees
It is the policy of the Department of Psychology to have a procedure for the early withdrawal or resignation of a trainee. The procedure will clarify the Departmental expectations of trainees, who may, for personal reasons or reasons of dissatisfaction, wish to terminate their tenure prior to the date set forth in the training agreement.

Step 1:
The psychology trainee who is considering early termination of the training year will first discuss this issue with the Training Director(s). The goal will be to clarify reasons for the decision and develop a plan to improve the problems and to create options that allow for the successful completion of the program.

Step 2:
In the event that resignation appears to be the only viable solution, the trainee will meet with the training director(s) and other relevant staff members (which may include clinical supervisors), in order to discuss the matter of resignation and create a timeline for ending.
Issues of patient care will be given priority consideration in developing a timeline for resignation.

Step 3:

Should it be a practicum student or intern requesting premature termination from their training experiences, the Director of Training from their home doctoral program is to be consulted regarding this request.

Step 4:
After meeting with the CHOC Director of Training(s) (and, for practicum students and interns, speaking with their doctoral program's Director of Training), the trainee will submit a written letter of resignation to the CHOC Director of Training(s).

Step 5:
Should it be a practicum student or intern, after officially resigning, a letter will be written by CHOC's Director of Training to the doctoral program's Director of Training outlining the problems, the attempts at resolution, and the trainee's decision to terminate their current position.

Step 6:
The trainee will be expected to complete all charting responsibilities and to follow standard termination procedures for CHOC prior to leaving the site.

Step 7:
Psychology trainees will only receive credit for the hours of training completed up to the point of the resignation.